



April 2, 2020

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Dear Members of the House Select Committee on COVID-19, Healthcare Workgroup:

On behalf of the North Carolina Nurses Association and the 140,000 Registered Nurses in the state, we want to thank you for your leadership in recent days as our state navigates the COVID-19 pandemic and for the opportunity to offer to you the feedback and perspective of nurses across the state.

We are committed to working with you and all of our State's leaders to do whatever we can to keep the residents of North Carolina healthy and strong and to be there to care for them if they become ill. Our members have been preparing and are already doing their part with much more to come, but nurses need help. Nurses are consistently voted the most trusted profession in the United States each year, in large part because of the amount of time they spend close to the patient, but this also means nurses carry the most risk in epidemics such as this.

Nurses are deeply concerned about the short supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other items designed to keep healthcare workers safe and patients alive. Nurses are also worried about the impact on the workforce when providers begin to get ill. It is not a matter of if, but when. The situation is appalling in most areas and nurses are at risk. Nurses have been asked to work the front lines without the necessary protection to keep them, their patients, or their families safe. They need vital help as soon as possible.

We recommend the following as ways you can immediately help keep North Carolina safe and well by keeping North Carolina nurses safe and well:

- Aggressively support "stay-at-home" orders. Use your influence to impress upon citizens how important it is to comply with requests so that we can avoid overwhelming nurses and the healthcare system, as well as unnecessary loss of life.
- Aggressively support and encourage Federal utilization of the Defense Production Act to most urgently ramp up manufacturing and distribution of PPE to North Carolina as soon as possible.
- Utilize all available measures to open up maximum flexibility for full utilization of the nursing workforce, including temporary policies to encourage volunteering.
- Encourage employer flexibility in how HR policies are utilized to offer nurses appropriate leave if infected with COVID-19 and ensure nurses impacted by any layoffs and/or reductions in hours are favorably considered for assistance.

Please call on NCNA if we may assist you in any way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis A. Taylor".

Dennis Taylor, DNP, ACNP-BC, NEA-BC
President, North Carolina Nurses Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tina C. Gordon".

Tina C. Gordon, MPA, CAE, FACHE
CEO, North Carolina Nurses Association